Claims:

1. A method for protecting Ethernet data packets transmitted over SDH/SONET traffic in a ring-like optical network formed by a number of nodes,

the method includes utilizing MS-SPRING/BLSR system for SDH/SONET traffic protection and, in case of one or more network failures that result in at least one isolated node in the network, comprises

preventing initiation of a squelching algorithm of the MS-SPRING/BLSR system with respect to the SDH/SONET virtual containers carrying the data Ethernet packets,

while ensuring that there is no standardized use of byte J1 in the network, with respect to the SDH/SONET virtual containers carrying the Ethernet packets.

2. The method according to Claim 1, wherein the nodes of the network are ADM (Add Drop Multiplexer) nodes.

3. The method according to Claim 1 or 2, wherein the virtual containers of the SDH/SONET traffic, are AU-4/AU-3.

4. The method according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein a standardized functionality of byte J1 is inactive in the network.

5. The method according to any one of Claims 1 to 3, comprising filling the J1 bytes of all the virtual containers carrying the Ethernet traffic by one and the same binary code word, thereby preventing the standardized use of the byte J1.

6. The method according to any one of Claims 1 to 5, further comprising:

- blocking initiation of said squelching algorithm also with respect to the virtual containers of the SDH/SONET traffic not carrying Ethernet packets, and
- ensuring the standardized use of byte J1 for the virtual containers not carrying the Ethernet data traffic.

7. A system for protecting Ethernet data packets transmitted over SDH/SONET traffic in a communication ring-like network, adapted to implement the method according to any one of claims 1 to 6.

8. A software product for protecting Ethernet data packets transmitted over SDH/SONET traffic in a communication ring-like network composed of nodes and controlled by a network manager, the software product being adapted for cooperating with MS-SPRING/BLSR system for the traffic protection, and being capable of blocking a squelching algorithm of the MS-SPRING/BLSR system with respect to the SDH/SONET traffic virtual containers carrying the Ethernet data packets, whenever at least one isolated node is detected in the network.

9. The software product according to Claim 8, comprising a manager software means operative to cooperate with the network manager, and a node software means operative to cooperate with embedded software of the network nodes.

10. The software product according to Claim 9, wherein the manager software means is operative to neutralize standardized functionality of byte J1 with respect to the virtual SDH/SONET containers carrying the Ethernet data packets.